

SECT. VIII.—*Vishwū-kūrma*^b

Is the son of Brūmha, and architect of the gods: he is painted white, has three eyes, holds a club in his right hand; wears a crown, a necklace of gold, and rings on his wrists. He presides over the arts, manufactures, &c.

The worship of this god is performed once, twice, or four times a year, in the month Ūgrūhayānū, Poushū, Choitrū, or Bhadrū, by all artificers, to obtain success in business. The ceremonies may be performed either in the day or night, before any implements of trade. The joiners set up their mallet, chisel, saw, hatchet, &c. as the representative of this god. Weavers choose their shuttle, &c. putting them into the hole in the earth wherein they place their feet when they sit at work. The razor is the barber's god on this occasion. The potter, after a month's fast, adopts and worships the wheel with which he turns his pots. Masons choose their trowel; washermen take the beetle or stamper, their smoothing irons, &c. as their god; blacksmiths worship their hammer and bellows; the farmer his plough; spinsters their wheel. The shoemaker chooses his awl and knife, and bows down to them: and thus, amongst all the artificers, each one chooses the principal tool or instrument with which he works, and makes it a god, or the representative of Vishwū-kūrma^c. The cere-

^b Vishwū, the world; kūrma, work.

^c This worship affords another strong proof of the low and sordid nature of idolatry, and strikingly illustrates the words of our Lord, 'after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' Instead of raising their minds to the Great Source of all good, these persons are taught to worship the tools belonging to their trades, as the cause of their temporal happiness. This conduct seems to be reprov'd in the first chapter of the book of Habak-

monies are not long; but according to their ability the worshippers provide as good a feast as possible. At the close of the festival, the crowd form themselves into parties of pleasure: some go upon the river in boats, singing songs, and playing on different instruments of music; others sit in companies, smoke, and relate the news of the village; others spend their time in gaming, and some resort to houses of ill-fame.

Though the illiterate consider this god, who may be called the Indian Vulcan, as the inventor of all the mechanic arts, the shilpū shastrū, a part of the original védū, are more properly considered as their source. These works are not now read in Bengal, if they really exist: they describe, it is said, the proper shape and dimensions of all the various images of the Hindoo gods.



SECT. IX.—*Kamū-dévū, the Indian Cupid*^d.

THE image of this god, the son of Brūmha, is that of a beautiful youth, holding in his hands a bow and arrow of flowers. He is always supposed to be accompanied by his wife Rūtee*, by spring personified, the cuckoo, the humming-bee, and gentle breezes; and is represented as wandering through the three worlds.

kuk, 'They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.'

^d Kamū, desire; dévū, god.

* From Rūmū, to play, or to give pleasure. It is said that the god of love found Rūtee in the house of Shūmbūrū, a giant, whom he destroyed.

The image of Kamū-dévū is never made in Bengal, but on the 13th of the increase of the moon in Choitrū an annual festival is held, when the ceremonies of worship are performed before the shalgramū. At the time of marriage, and when a wife leaves her father's house to go to her husband for the first time, petitions are addressed to this god for children, and for happiness in the marriage state.

The pooranū and kavyū shastrūs abound with stories respecting Kamū-dévū, one of which I here give from the Kalikū pooranū:—The god of love, the most beautiful creature in the three worlds, with whom every one was pleased, immediately after his creation solicited the commands of Brūmha; who assured him, that, with his five arrows, he should wound with love the hearts of the inhabitants of the three worlds; that all beings should be subject to his sway, not excepting even Brūmha, Vishnū, and Shivū; and that through him the universe should be peopled. Kūndūrpū first discharged his arrow at Brūmha himself, who became enamoured of his own daughter, Sūndhya. Mūrēēchee, and the other sons of Brūmha, also smitten by his arrows, were inflamed with unlawful desires toward their sister. Shivū said to Brūmha, 'What! art thou inflamed with lust towards thy own daughter?' Brūmha was covered with shame, and, from the perspiration which issued from his body, Ūgnishwūta and other progenitors of mankind¹, to the number of 149,000, were born. Brūmha, full of rage against Kūndūrpū, cursed him, and declared that he should be burnt to ashes by the fire from the eye of Shivū; but on his intercessions pro-

¹ In performing the ceremony called tūrpūnū, seven names are used in pouring out drink-offerings to all these ancestors.

mised, that when Shivũ should be married to Doorga, he would restore to him his body.

Names. Mũdũnũ, or he who intoxicates with love;—Mũn-mũt'hũ, he who agitates the mind;—Marũ, he who wounds with love;—Prũdyoomnũ, he who overcomes all;—Mẽẽnũ-kẽtũnu, he whose flag is a fish;—Kũndũrpũ, he who bloats the mind with desire;—ũnũngũ, he who is destitute of body;—Ramũ, the creator of desire;—Pũn-chũshũrũ, he who has five arrows;—Smũrũ, he who inflames;—Shũmbũraree, the enemy of the giant Shũmbũru;—Mũnũsijũ, he who is born in the heart;—Koosoomẽshoo, he whose arrows are flowers;—ũnũnyũjũ, he who is born only in the mind;—Pooshpũ-dhũnwa, he whose bow is made of flowers;—Rũtee-pũtee, the husband of Rũtee;—Mũkũrũ-dhwũjũ, he whose flag is the animal Mũkũrũ;—Atmũbhoo, he who is self-created.

SECT. X.—*Sũtyũ-Narayũnũ.*

THIS is a form of Vishnoo, but the image is never made: a pan of water is the substitute.

This god is worshipped several times in the year, in the houses of the richer Hindoos, when all the bramhũns in the village are invited. The object of worship, painted red, and covered with leaves of the mango tree, is placed near a square board, at the four corners of which four arrows are set up, and from which garlands of flowers are suspended; a piece of clean linen is laid on the board, and then the offerings of flowers and sweetmeats. At the close of the festival, some one present reads different marvellous

stories in praise of this god. The sweetmeats are given to the guests, especially to the bramhūns: the acquisition of riches, recovery from sickness, the birth of children, the obtaining of any of the blessings, or the removing any of the miseries of life, are objects sought in the worship of this god.

THE preceding account of the terrestrial gods contains the names of all the principal deities of this description worshipped in Bengal. I am aware, however, that worship is paid to some idols not mentioned here; but these are only different forms of the deities whose history is given, and the worship is merely an appendage to the ceremonies at the great festivals.

CHAP. VI.

TERRESTRIAL GODDESSES.

SECT. I.—*Sēeta*.

THIS is the image of a yellow woman, covered with jewels: it always accompanies and is worshipped with that of her husband.

Sēeta was the daughter of king Jñūkū^a, whose capital was Mit'hila. Her history, after her marriage with Ramū, will be found in the account of that god^b.

SECT. II.—*Radha*.

RADHA was the wife of Ayūnu-ghoshū, a cowherd of Gokoolū, where Krishnū in his youth resided: through

^a Shivū gave to Jñūkū a bow so heavy that a thousand men could not lift it, and which the father placed in a separate room, and commanded Sēeta to sweep the room daily; in doing which she used to lift up the bow with her left hand, and sweep under it with her right. One day the king saw her thus move the bow, and, filled with astonishment, was at a loss to whom he should give this daughter in marriage. After some time, he came to this resolution, that whoever should be able to break this bow, should obtain Sēeta.—*Udhyatmu-Ramayana*.

^b While Sēeta was detained at Lūnka, she was fed with ambrosia for twelve months by Indrū, as she would not eat in the house of a giant. That Ravūnū could not destroy her virtue, is thus accounted for by the

Vūraee, a procuress, he seduced Radha, and led her into the forest near the river Yūmoona, where they continued till Krishnū left her to begin the war with Kūngsū.

This mistress of Krishnū has been deified with her paramour. Her image is set up in temples with different forms of Krishnū, and worshipped at the festivals of this god. The act of looking upon these images together, is declared by the shastrūs to be an act of peculiar merit !

If a Hindoo be charged with any particular act of which he wishes to express his abhorrence, he exclaims, ‘ Radha-Krishnū !’ Many persons repeat ‘ Ramū ! Ramū ! Ramū !’ on such occasions, but no one says Sēēta-Ramū ; yet when Krishnū’s name is to be repeated, they always join to it that of his mistress Radha.

One of the Hindoo learned men has written a work (the Radha-tūntrū) to prove that Radha was an incarnation of Bhūgūvūtēē ; and this opinion is quoted by the Hindoos of the present day to cover this abominable transaction.



SECT. III.—*Rookminēē and Sūtyū-bhama.*

THESE are the most distinguished wives of Krishnū, but their images are never made, Krishnū being always associ-

pooranūs :—This giant had before seized the wives of the gods, and dishonoured them ; and one day he dishonoured his niece, the wife of king Nūlū : for which crime Koovérū cursed him, and caused fire to proceed from his ten heads at once. By the entreaty of Brūmha, this curse was mitigated ; with the proviso, however, that if he ever defiled the wife of another, it should be renewed in full force.—*Ibid.*

ated with Radha his mistress, and not with his lawful wives. At the festivals of Krishnū, however, these women are worshipped, as well as six other wives of this god, viz. Jambū-būtēē, Mitrūvinda, Lūgūnūjitēē, Lūkshmūna, Kalindēē, and Bhūdra; but Rookminēē and Sūtyū-bhama are the most distinguished.

SECT. IV.—*Soobhūdra.*

THIS sister of Jūgūnnat'hū is worshipped at the same time with her brother, and placed with him in the temples dedicated to his honour.

CHAP. VII.

DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY THE LOWER ORDERS
ONLY.SECT. I.—*Pūnchanūnū*^a

Is a form of Shivū : the image has five faces, and in each face three eyes. Some persons make a clay image, and worship it with the usual forms, adding bloody sacrifices ; while others worship Pūnchanūnū before a stone placed underneath the vūtū^b, ūshwūt'ht'hū^c, or koolū^d trees. This stone is painted red at the top, and anointed with oil^e. Offerings of flowers, fruits, water, sweetmeats, and fried peas accompany the worship, and sometimes bloody sacrifices. In almost every village this worship is performed beneath some one of these trees. In some villages several of these shapeless stones^f are to be seen thus anointed, and consecrated to the worship of this god. In other places the clay images of Pūnchanūnū are placed in houses, or under trees ; and old women, called dyasinēēs^g, devote them-

^a The five-faced.^b Ficus Indica.^c Ficus religiosa.^d Zizyphus jujuba.

^e The statue of the god Terminus was either a square stone, or a log of wood ; which the Romans usually perfumed with ointments, and crowned with garlands.

^f The representative of the goddess Passinuntia was a shapeless stone. The Arabians are said to have worshipped a stone without the form or shape of a deity.

^g It is probable that these dyasinēēs resemble the priestesses of Cybele.

selves to his service: they sweep the inside of the clay temple, and repeat the ceremonies of worship for others; constantly remaining near the image, and receiving all offerings and presents. Not more than one woman waits upon one idol, unless she admit a pupil, who expects to succeed her. These women, either married or widows, are treated almost as witches.

There is no appointed time for the worship of this god, but Tuesdays or Saturdays are preferred to other days.

There are some places in Bengal, where images of Pūnchanūnū are in great celebrity for bestowing the blessing of children, and other favours on the worshippers.

The Hindoo women are terrified at this god, and are exceedingly afraid lest their children should, in play, injure the stone under the tree*. Some therefore warn their chil-

* The late Jügünnat'hü-Türkkü-Pūnchanūnū, who died in the year 1807, at the advanced age of 112, and who was supposed to be the most learned Hindoo in Bengal, used to relate the following anecdote of himself:—Till he was twenty years old he was exceedingly ungovernable, and refused to apply to his studies. One day his parents rebuked him very sharply for his conduct, and he wandered to a neighbouring village, where he hid himself in the vütü tree, under which was a very celebrated image of Pūnchanūnū. While in this tree, he discharged his urine on the god, and afterwards descended and threw him into a neighbouring pond. The next morning, when the person arrived whose livelihood depended on this image, he discovered his god was gone!! He returned into the village distracted, and the village was very soon all in an uproar about the lost god. In the midst of this confusion, the parents of Jügünnat'hü-Türkkü-Pūnchanūnū arrived to search for their son; when a man in the crowd declared that he had seen a young man sitting in Pūnchanūnū's tree, but what was become of the god he could not say. The runaway at length appeared, and the suspicions of all the villagers fell upon him, as the stealer of Pūnchanūnū. After some time he confessed the fact, pointed out the place where he had thrown the stone, and added

dren against going near these stones, by declaring that Pūchanūnū will assuredly kill them, if they touch or play with his image.

Children in fits of epilepsy are supposed to be seized by this god, and thrown into a state of frenzy, till they foam at the mouth, tear their hair, &c. The mother asks the supposed evil spirit his name, who answers, through the child, 'I am Pūchanūnū: your child has cast dust on my image, kicked it, and is the ringleader of all the children of the village in this wickedness. I will certainly take away his life.' The dyasinēē is now called, who comforts the weeping and alarmed family, and addresses the god thus: 'O Pūchanūnū! I pray thee restore this child: these are thy worshippers: the offender is but a child; and it is not proper for thee to be angry with such paltry offenders. If thou restore the child, the parents will sacrifice a goat to thee, and present to thee many offerings.' If this should fail to render the god propitious, they take the child to the image, before which they sit down, and offer the most excessive flattery to the god, causing the child to beat its head on the ground. After using every contrivance, they retire, and, at the close of the fit, believing that Pūchanūnū has cured the child, they present to him offerings according to their ability.

moreover that he had discharged his urine on the god. All hands were lifted up in amazement at this atrocious crime, and every one present pronounced his death as certain; for Pūchanūnū would certainly revenge such a daring insult. Our young hero was himself terribly affrighted, and from that hour sat down so sedulously to his studies, that he became the most learned man in Bengal. He was employed by the government in India for many years, at a salary of 300 roopees per month, and used to give advice on the subject of the Hindoo law in all difficult cases.

SECT. II.—*Dhūrmū T'hakoorū.*

ANOTHER form of Shivū. A black stone of any shape becomes the representative of this god. The worshippers paint the part designated as the forehead, and place it under a tree; others place the stone in the house, and give it silver eyes, and anoint it with oil, and worship it. Almost every village has one of these idols.

A festival in honour of this god is observed by some of the lower orders in Voishakū, in the day. The ceremonies are like those at the swinging festival, with the addition of bloody sacrifices, the greater number of which are goats. At this time devotees swing on hooks; perforate their sides with cords; pierce their tongues with spits; walk upon fire, and take it up in their hands; walk upon thorns; and throw themselves upon spikes, keeping a severe fast. The people who assemble to see these feats of self-torture, are entertained with singing, music, and dancing. On the 14th day, a great feast is held, when people bring their offerings, and giving them to the officiating bramhūn, request him to present them to the idol, to fulfil a vow; or with petitions to the god for some particular favour, as the birth of a child, recovery from sickness, or any other blessing.

Wherever this idol is placed in a house, a woman called a dyasinēē attends upon it, and repeats the daily ceremonies.

At two villages in Bengal, Poosoorēē and Rayū-kalee, the worship of this god is constantly attended by crowds from a great distance. If a woman's eldest child die, she

makes a vow before witnesses, that she will not cut her hair for two years; and that then, going to one of these villages, she will cut it off, and present an offering to the god, provided he will preserve her second child. Some women, as an acknowledgment of a favour, or to beg a blessing, take a young child in their arms; and putting on wet clothes, place an earthen pot full of burning coals upon some cloth on their heads; and sitting before the god in a supplicating posture, continue for some time offering incense, throwing Indian pitch into the pan of coals.

A poor man sometimes places the black stone, adorned with garlands, &c. in a basket, and the offerings which he collects at the doors of housekeepers in another, and, tying the baskets to a bamboo which he lays on his shoulder, carries the god from door to door as a shew; while another plays on a rude instrument of music, and joins in singing the praises of Dhürmū-t'hakoorū. Householders give a handful of rice, and the beggars present in return a flower which has been offered to the god.

SECT. III.—*Kaloo-rayū.*

THIS is another form of Shivū: the image is that of a yellow man sitting on a tyger, holding in his right hand an arrow, and in his left a bow.

A few of the lower orders set up clay images of this god in straw houses, and worship them at pleasure. The wood-cutters in the Eastern, Western, and Southern forests of Bengal, in order to obtain protection from wild beasts, adopt a peculiar mode of worshipping this idol. The

head-boatman raises elevations of earth three or four inches high, and about three feet square; upon which he places balls of clay, painted red; and, among other ceremonies, offers rice, flowers, fruits, and the water of the Ganges carried from the river Hooglee, keeping a fast: the god then directs him in a dream where to cut wood free from danger. There is no authority for this worship in the shastrũs.

Dũkshina-rayũ is another god worshipped in the same manner, and by the same class of persons.

SECT. IV.—*Kalũ-Bhoirũvũ.*

A NAKED Shivũ, smeared with ashes; having three eyes; riding on a dog; and holding in one hand a horn, and in the other a drum. In several places in Bengal this image is worshipped daily.

Shivũ, under this name, is regent of Kashẽẽ, (Benares.) All persons dying at Benares are intitled to a place in Shivu's heaven; but if any one violate the laws of the shastrũ during his residence there, Kalũ-Bhoirũvu at death grinds him between two mill-stones.

SECT. V.—*Worship to cure the Itch and Scurvy.*

THE goddess Shẽẽtula is worshipped by the Hindoo females whenever their families are afflicted with the itch; and the god Ghẽtoo (a black boiling pot) is wor-

shipped to remove the scurvy or any kind of blotches on the skin.

In the preceding sections of this work, the god Prit'hivēē, regent of the earth, should have been noticed : he has no separate worship, but certain formulas are repeated in his name at all the great festivals.—Vishnoo is revered as the Household God ; he is worshipped when a person enters a new house, or at any other time to procure the removal of family misfortunes.—Doorga should have been mentioned also as the Village Goddess ; she is worshipped by the villagers in the month Asharhū, before a jar of water, when bloody sacrifices are offered. An annual festival is also held in each village in Asharhū, in honour of Vishnoo, Indrū, Koovérū, and Lūkshmēē ; when the persons pay the first instalment of their rents. The land-owner is at the expense.

CHAP. VIII.

WORSHIP OF BEINGS IN STRANGE SHAPES.

SECT. I.—*Urdhū-narēēshvūrū*^h.

HERE Shivū and Doorga are united in one body, white and yellow. The origin of this image is thus given in the Lingū pooranū :—Shivū and Doorga after their marriage lived on mount Koilasū, where Doorga kept the house, cooked, and nursed her two children, Gūnēshū and Kartikū; and Shivū supported the family as a mendicant. On a certain occasion, Shivū, having one day smoked intoxicating herbs to excess, was unable to go his daily rounds. Doorga informed him that there was nothing in the house; that the family had eaten half of what was collected the day before, and that Gūnēshū's rat and Kartikū's peacockⁱ had devoured the rest. After much altercation, Shivū left his hut, and Doorga, to avoid perishing for want, went to her father's, taking her children with her. On the way Narūdū met her, and advised her to assume the form of the goddess Ūnnū-pōorna^k, and lay an embargo on all the food where Shivū would ask for alms. She did so; and Shivū begged in vain for a handful of rice. Narūdū at length meeting Shivū also, persuaded him to return to his wife: Doorga received him with joy, and relieved his hunger;

^h Urdhū, half; narēē, woman; ēēshvūrū, a name of Shivū.

ⁱ Gūnēshū rides on a rat, and Kartikū on a peacock.

^k One of the forms of Doorga, as the regent of food.

which so pleased the old mendicant, that in pressing her in his arms both bodies became one.

In the Radha-tūntrū it is said, that Shivū and Doorga assumed this form in order to prove that Shivū is the one Brūmhū, in whom both the male and female powers are united.

In one of the smaller Hindoo poems, a different account of the origin of this image is given :—Shivū, finding it very difficult to procure a subsistence by the alms which he daily collected, especially as Doorga had ten mouths, and Gūneshū a very large belly, agreed with his wife, that they should assume one body, which would be supported with less labour.

Notwithstanding this apparently close union of Shivū and Doorga, the Shivopa-khyānū, a poem, contains a story, in which Doorga is represented as quarrelling with Shivū in a fit of jealousy, on account of his begging in that part of Shivū-poorū¹ where the women of ill-fame live.—On another occasion, as related in the Ramayūnū, a dreadful quarrel took place betwixt Shivū and Doorga, because Pūrūshoo-ramū had beaten Kartikū and Gūneshū, the two sons of Doorga. Another account of these quarrels is given both in the Ramayūnū and the Mūhabharūtū :—Ramū's efforts to destroy Ravūnū proving abortive, in consequence of the protection afforded the giant by Shivū, all the gods whom Ravūnū had oppressed joined Ramū in supplications to Shivū : and on the seventh day, when Ravūnū was to be slain, the gods resolved to be present ; and Shivū was about to join them, when Doorga interfered, and asked him how

¹ Shivū's heaven.

he could witness the destruction of his own disciple : that disciple, who had stood praying to him all day in the sultry weather, surrounded with four fires ; who had continued his devotions in the chilling cold, standing in the water ; and had persevered in his supplications, standing on his head in the midst of torrents of rain?—Here she poured a volley of abuse upon Shivũ, as a withered old fellow who smoaked intoxicating herbs ; covered himself with ashes ; dwelt in cemeteries ; a beggar ; whose name would never be remembered ;—‘and dost thou think,’ said she, ‘that I shall be present at such a sight?’—Shivũ could no longer smother his resentment, but reproached her in the severest terms, reminding her that she was only a woman, and knew nothing : and indeed that she did not act like woman, for she was continually wandering from place to place ; engaged in wars ; was a drunkard ; spent her time with degraded beings ; killed giants, drank their blood, and hung the skulls round her neck. Doorga was enraged to madness by these cutting reproaches, so that the gods became alarmed, and intreated Ramũ to join in supplications to Doorga, or there would be no possibility of destroying Ravũnũ. He did so, and so pleased the goddess by his flatteries, that she was at length brought to consent to the destruction of Ravũnũ.

At the new or full moon, or on the 8th or 14th of the moon in any month, or on the last day of any calendar month, in the day, the usual ceremonies of worship are performed before this disgusting image, which is thrown into the water the succeeding day. The formulas are those used in the worship of Doorga, not of Shivũ. Animals are slain and offered to the goddess.

SECT. II.—*Krishnū-Kalēē.*

THIS scandalous image is worshipped annually at the total wane of the moon^m in Kartikū, in the night.

Of all the milkmaids that used to collect around him, Krishnū was most charmed with Radha, the wife of Ayūnū-ghoshū. When the attachment was first formed, the sister of Ayūnū-ghoshū saw them together, and informed her brother of the circumstance; at which Radha became very much alarmed, assured Krishnū that her sister-in-law had seen her with him, and that her husband would certainly destroy her. Krishnū commanded her not to fear, adding, if her husband came, he would assume the form of Kalēē, and she should be found in the act of worship. When her husband and others arrived, they found her thus employed, and joined her in her devotions. Could it be believed that such an abominable instance of adultery and treachery would be made the subject of worship?—yet so it is. Four images are made from this story, viz. Krishnū-Kalēē, Radha, Ayūnū-ghoshū, and Kootila, Ayūnū's sister.—Bloody sacrifices are offered to this image; but the worshippers of Krishnū are ashamed, when asked by the shaktūs, if Krishnū has begun to drink blood?

SECT. III.—*Hūrēē-Hūrū.*

HERE Vishnoo (Hūrēē) and Shivū (Hūrū) appear in one body; the former is black, and the latter white. The image has four arms and two feet.

^m A very proper time for such a worship. Let neither sun nor moon shine on such deeds.

The origin of this image is thus recorded in the Vishnoo pooranũ :—Lūkshmēē and Doorga were once sitting together in the presence of Shivũ, when Lūkshmēē contended that her husband (Vishnoo) was greater than Shivũ ; which Doorga as firmly denied. Lūkshmēē said, her husband must be greatest, since Shivũ had worshipped him. In the midst of this conversation Vishnoo arrived; and to convince Lūkshmēē that both were equal, he immediately entered the body of Shivũ, and they became one.

Another account of the origin of this image is given in the Kashēē-khündũ, a part of the Skündũ pooranũ.—On a certain occasion, when Vishnoo and Shivũ were conversing together, Shivũ requested Vishnoo to assume the beautiful female form which he had formerly done at the churning of the sea: to which he consented; when Shivũ, overpowered with desire, pursued the flying beauty, till, overcome with fatigue, she hid herself behind a tree, and reassumed the form of Vishnoo. Shivũ, however, embraced Vishnoo with such eagerness, that the bodies of both became oneⁿ.

The worship of this image takes place whenever any one pleases. Stone images in some places are continually preserved; and in others a clay one is made, and worshipped, and afterwards committed to the river.

Raja Krishnũ-chũndrũ-rayũ expended fifty or sixty thousand roopees at the consecration of a stone image of Huree-Hũrũ, which may be still seen at Gũnga-vasũ, near Nũ-deeya. While this raja lived, fifty roopees were daily expended in this worship; yet, though a number of villages

ⁿ The reader need not be informed how much this story in its termination resembles that of the nymph Salmacis, who is said to have fallen excessively in love with a son of Mercury by his sister Venus.

have been bequeathed to the god, the expense of the daily worship and offerings is less now than formerly. Few places in Bengal, however, can now boast of a temple at which fifty roopees are daily expended *. No bloody sacrifices are offered to this image.

However shocked a professed Christian may be at reading such accounts, and however revolting to every feeling of modesty and decency these stories may be, the Hindoo philosophers have thought proper to perpetuate them, and in this image to personify lust itself. The bramhũns also bow down to this image as to a deity worthy of adoration.

* This expense is incurred in the meat-offerings, consisting of rice, peas, salt, oil, ghee, butter, sugar, sweetmeats, fruits of different kinds, herbs, spices, betle nuts, &c. ; in the offerings of cloth, metal vessels, and other things ; and in the wages of the bramhũns and shōōdrũs employed. About ten bramhũns and fourteen shōōdrũs constantly attend on the service of this image.

CHAP. IX.

WORSHIP OF HUMAN BEINGS.

Deified Men and Women.

ALL the bramhuns, but especially the religious guides, (gooroo,) are objects of worship among the Hindoos, and have divine honours paid to them. The spiritual guide, in the estimation of the disciple, is literally a god. Whenever he approaches, the disciple prostrates himself in the dust before him, and never sits in his presence without leave. He drinks the water with which he has washed the feet of his gooroo*, and relies entirely upon his blessing for final happiness. I have heard some Hindoos speak with comparative contempt of all other ways of salvation. When the claims of the bramhũns to deity have been disputed by any one, I have seen the poor besotted shōōdrũ prostrate himself at the feet of the nearest bramhũn, and, raising his head, and closing his hands, say, 'You are my god.' At the same time the character of the bramhũn has perhaps been notorious for every vice.

The shastrũs declare that the daughters of bramhũns, till they are eight years old, are objects of worship, as forms of the goddess Bhũgũvũtēē; and some persons worship these girls daily. The worshipper, taking the daughter of

* Doing reverence to the very feet of superiors prevailed among the Jews. Hence the woman washed the feet of Christ, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

some neighbouring bramhūn, and placing her on a seat, performs the ceremonies of worship; in which he presents to her flowers, paint, water, garlands^p, incense, and, if a rich man, offerings of cloth and ornaments. He closes the whole by prostrating himself before the girl. At the worship of some of the female deities also, the daughters of bramhūns have divine honours paid to them.

The wives of bramhūns are also worshipped occasionally as an act of great merit. A man of property sometimes invites ten, twenty, or one hundred of these females, and repeating before them forms of prayer, praise, &c. worships them, and at the close entertains them with the offerings. This is frequently done at Benares.

On the 14th of the decrease of the moon in Shravānū, at the time of the Savitrēē vrātū, the wives of bramhūns very generally worship their husbands. The worshipper, having placed a seat for her husband, and presented him with new garments, entreats him to be seated, and puts round his neck a garland of flowers. She then anoints his body with fragrant ointments, and performs before him the various ceremonies which belong to the worship of the gods. In presenting the offerings she says, regarding her husband as a form of Vishnū, ‘Oh! husband, grant that I may long live in the marriage state, and never become a widow.’ The husband then partakes of the offerings, and the wife having walked round him either three or seven times, the service ends. The origin of this ceremony is given in the Brāhmhū-voivūrttū pooranū, but the story is too long for insertion.

^p Both the Greeks and Romans, it is well known, used to adorn their images with garlands at the time of worship.

Many of the tūntrūs, and particularly the Roodrūyamūlū, the Yonēē-tūntrū, and the Nēēlū-tūntrū, contain directions respecting a most extraordinary and shocking mode of worship, which is understood in a concealed manner amongst the Hindoos by the name of Chūkrū. These shastrūs direct, that the person who wishes to perform this ceremony must first, in the night, choose a woman as the object of worship. If the person be a dūkshinacharēē, he must take his own wife; and if a vamacharēē, the daughter of a dancer, a kūpalee, a washerman, a barber, a chūndalū, or of a Mūsulman, or a prostitute; and place her on a seat, or mat: and then bring broiled fish, flesh, fried peas, rice, spirituous liquors, sweetmeats, flowers, and other offerings; which, as well as the female, must be purified by the repeating of incantations. To this succeeds the worship of the guardian deity; and after this, that of the female,—who sits naked.

* * * * *

Here things too abominable to enter the ears of man, and impossible to be revealed to a Christian public, are contained in the directions of the shastrū. The learned bramhūn who opened to me these abominations, made several efforts—paused and began again—and then paused again—before he could mention the shocking indecencies prescribed by his own shastrūs.

As the object of worship is a living person, she partakes of the offerings, even of the spirituous liquors; and of the flesh, though it should be that of the cow. The refuse is eaten by the persons present, however different their casts; nor must any one refuse to partake of the offerings. The spirituous liquors must be drunk by measure; and the company while eating must put food into each other's mouths.

The priest then—in the presence of all—behaves towards this female in a manner which decency forbids to be mentioned; after which the persons present repeat many times the name of some god, performing actions unutterably abominable : and here this most diabolical business closes. The benefits promised to the worshippers are riches, absorption in Brūmhū, &c.

At present the persons committing these abominations (vamacharēēs) are becoming more and more numerous ; and in proportion as they increase, the ceremonies are more and more indecent. They are performed in secret ; but that these practices are becoming very frequent among the bramhūns and others, is a fact known to all. Those who abide by the rules of the shastrūs are comparatively few : the generality confine themselves chiefly to those parts that belong to gluttony, drunkenness, and whoredom, without acquainting themselves with all the minute rules and incantations of the shastrūs.

CHAP. X.

THE WORSHIP OF BEASTS.

SECT. I.—*The Cow.*

BRŪMHA created the bramhūns and the cow at the same time : the bramhūns to read the formulas, and the cow to afford milk, (clarified butter,) for the burnt-offerings. The gods by partaking of the burnt-offerings are said to enjoy exquisite pleasure, and men by eating clarified butter destroy their sins. The cow is called the mother of the gods, and is declared by Brūmha to be a proper object of worship.

The shastrū appoints that the images of the gods shall be anointed with milk, curds, clarified butter, cow-dung, and cows' urine, whereby they become free from impurity ; and all unclean places are purified with cow-dung. Indeed many bramhūns do not go out of the house in a morning, till the door-way has been rubbed with cow-dung.

The cow was created on the first of Voishakhū, and on this day, or on the second of the moon in Jyoisht'hū, she is worshipped annually. No image is used, but the worship is performed in the cow-house before a jar of water. The ceremonies are the same as those before the images of the gods : the prayers are necessarily peculiar to the object worshipped. The officiating bramhūn, at the close of the

service, reads the whole of the Chündēē, a poem relating to the wars of Doorga. On the 13th of Phalagoonū, the milkmen paint the horns and hoofs of their cattle yellow, and bathe them in the river. Persons strict in their religion worship the cow daily: after bathing, they throw flowers at her feet, and feed her with fresh grass, saying, 'O Bhūgū-vūtee ! eat ;' and then walk round her three or seven times, making obeisance.

If you speak among Hindoos of eating the flesh of cows, they immediately raise their hands to their ears: yet milkmen, carmen, and farmers, beat the cow as unmercifully as a carrier of coals beats his ass in England; and many starve them to death in the cold weather, rather than be at the expense of giving them food*. Thus is the cow at once a beast of burden and a goddess. Some of the poor think themselves happy if they can support a cow, as by serving this animal they expect reward in a future state. If a man sell his cow, the shastrūs threaten him with the torments of hell during as many thousand years as there are hairs on her body. If any one neglect to burn cow-dung, &c. in the cow-house, whereby smoke is raised, and the musquitoes prevented from hurting the cows, he will descend into the hell of musquitoes and gad-flies. The gift of a cow to a bramhūn is an act of great merit.

The dung of the cow is gathered and dried as fuel amongst the Hindoos. Some cows are of more value for their dung than for their milk; for the Bengal cow gives very little milk indeed, compared with the European cow.

* In the year 1812, a bramhūn was convicted before the magistrate of Serampore, of stealing from a relative a cow in calf, and offering this goddess for sale to a butcher.

SECT. II.—*The Monkey.*

THE black-faced monkey, Hūnooman^b, the son of the god Pūvūnū, by Ūnjūna, a female monkey^c, is believed to be an incarnation of Shivū.

The Hindoos worship Hūnooman on their birth-day to obtain long life, which they suppose this monkey can bestow, as he is immortal. In some temples his image is set up alone, and in others with that of Ramū and Sēēta, and worshipped daily. The worship of Ramū is always preceded by a few ceremonies in honour of Hūnooman.

Stone images of Hūnooman are kept in the houses of some of his disciples, and worshipped daily. The worshipper of this animal is promised every gratification he can desire.

Many Hindoos receive the initiating incantation by which this monkey becomes their guardian deity. The mark which these disciples make on their foreheads is the same as that made by the followers of Shivū.

About twenty years ago, Eeshwūrū-chūndrū, the raja of Nūdēēya, spent 100,000 roopees in marrying two monkeys^d,

^b Hūnooman broke his cheek-bone by a fall from the sun's orbit ; and his name is derived from hūnoo, the cheek bone.

^c There is nothing too filthy for idolatry : here the god of the winds pays his addresses to a monkey, as Jupiter is said to have done to a swan.

^d At this time none of these monkeys were to be seen about Nūdēēya ; now they are so numerous that they devour almost all the fruit of the orchards, as the inhabitants are afraid of hurting them.

when all the parade common at Hindoo marriages was exhibited. In the marriage procession were seen elephants, camels, horses richly caparisoned, palanqueens, lamps, and flambeaus; the male monkey was fastened in a fine palanqueen, having a crown upon his head, with men standing by his side to fan him; then followed singing and dancing girls in carriages; every kind of Hindoo music; a grand display of fireworks, &c. Dancing, music, singing, and every degree of low mirth, were exhibited at the bridegroom's palace for twelve days together. At the time of the marriage ceremony, learned bramhũns were employed in reading the formulas from the shastrũs!

Amongst men of sense the performance of the ceremonies of worship before the image of this monkey is attended with a degree of disgrace. I have heard of a quarrel between two bramhũns, one of whom was paid by a rich Hindoo to repeat the ceremonies of Hindoo worship before the image of Hũnooman, daily, at his house: amidst the quarrel the other said, 'Thou refuse of bramhũns! thou gainest a subsistence by worshipping a monkey.'

Stories of this god.—When Hũnooman first saw the rising sun, thinking it a ripe fruit, he leaped up to the residence of the god of day, and seized his chariot: Indrũ fearing Hũnooman would swallow the glorious luminary, with his thunderbolt smote him to the earth, where he lay lifeless. His distracted mother applied to his father Pũvũnũ, who, enraged at the loss of his son, retired into an inaccessible chasm, and bound up the wind, till both men and gods began to perish. Brũmha, Vishnoo, Shivũ, and other gods now petitioned Pũvũnũ; but he refused them the privilege of breathing, unless they would make Hũnooman immortal. Brũmha then bestowed on Hũnooman the water of life, and

Pūvūnū restored to men and gods the vital air.—When ten years old, Hūnooman was possessed of immense strength. He brought a stone, from a mountain, sixteen or twenty miles in circumference, and threw it into a pool of water where a number of sages were at worship. This raised the water, so that the sages, who had closed their eyes in the act of meditation, began to sink. After a few struggles they regained the land, and again sat down with closed eyes to their work. Hūnooman next took out the stone, and the waters retired; and when the sages put out their hands to take up water for worship, they were again disappointed. Opening their eyes, they saw the water had sunk exceedingly; and following it, again closed their eyes, and sat down. Hūnooman again flung in the stone, and the sages began to sink. He continued to repeat these frolics, till the sages, discovering the culprit, took away his strength. The sagacious monkey now began to flatter the sages; brought them fruits, &c. from the forest, and performed, with agility, every act of menial service. After three years they blessed him, and assured him that, when he should see Ramū upon mount Rishyūmōōkū, he should obtain twice his former strength.—On a certain occasion Hūnooman was resolved to put the strength of Bhēēmū to trial, as he was reputed to be so tremendous a giant: and lengthening his tail, he threw it across the path. As the Hindoos never stride across a person's body, or even his shadow, Bhēēmū requested Hūnooman to take up his tail: but he complained he was grown old and could not. At last Bhēēmū stooped to lift it out of his way; he tried at the end, and then at the middle, but found, giant as he was, he could not lift up this monkey's tail. Overcome with astonishment, he began to praise Hūnooman, and at length prevailed on him to promise that he would help the Pandūvūs in their expected war with Dooryodhūnū.

SECT. III.—*The Dog*

Carries Kalū-Bhoirūvū, a form of Shivū, and therefore receives the worship of the Hindoos whenever his master is worshipped*. I have heard also that there are many Hindoos in the west of Hindoost'hanū, who pay their devotions to the dog, and become his disciples. Though the dog is thus placed amongst the objects of worship, he is mentioned in the Mūhabharūtū as an unclean animal: every offering which he approaches is rendered unacceptable to the gods, and every one who touches him must purify himself by bathing.

SECT. IV.—*The Shackal.*

THE Tūntrūs mention an incarnation of Doorga in the form of the shackal, when she carried the child Krishnū over the Yūmoona, in his flight from king Kūngsū. All the worshippers of the female deities adore the shackal as a form of this goddess, especially the vamacharēēs, who present offerings to him daily. Every worshipper lays the offerings on a clean place in his house, and calls the god to come and partake of them. As this is done at the hour when the shackals leave their lurking places, one of these animals sometimes comes and eats the food in the presence of the worshipper: this will not appear wonderful when it is considered, that the same animal finds food placed for him in this place every day. In temples dedicated to Doorga and other deities, a stone image of the shackal is

* The dog, it will be remembered, was consecrated to Mars.

placed on a pedestal, and daily worshipped. When a shakal passes a Hindoo, he must bow to it; and if it pass on the left hand, it is a most lucky circumstance.

SECT. V.—*Other Animals worshipped.*

THE elephant, the lion, the bull, the buffalo, the rat, the deer, the goat, &c. are worshipped at the festivals of the gods whom they respectively carry, that is, of Indrū, Doorga, Shivū, Yūmū, Gūnēshū, Pūvūnū, and Brūmha.

CHAP. XI.

THE WORSHIP OF BIRDS.

SECT. I.—*Gūroorū*^a.

THIS god, with the head and wings of a bird^b, and the rest of his body like that of a man, is called the king of the birds, and the carrier of Vishnoo. Vinūta, the wife of Kūshyūpū, the progenitor of gods and men, laid an egg^c, and became the mother of this bird-god. As soon as *Gūroorū* was born, his body expanded till it touched the sky; all the other animals were terrified at him; his eyes were like lightning; the mountains fled with the wind of his wings, and the rays which issued from his body set the four quarters of the world on fire. The affrighted gods sought the help of Ūgnee, conceiving that *Gūroorū* must be an incarnation of the god of fire.

In consequence of a dispute betwixt Vinūta, the mother of *Gūroorū*, and Kūdroo, the mother of the serpents, respecting the colour of the horse procured at the churning of the sea, a continual enmity has subsisted betwixt the

^a Some suppose *Gūroorū* to be a large species of vulture, and others the gigantic crane.

^b *Gūroorū* in some degree resembles Mercury, viz. in his having wings, and being the messenger of Vishnoo, as Mercury was of Jupiter.

^c Jupiter is said to have been enamoured of the goddess Nemesis in the shape of a goose; and that she laid an egg, from which was born Helena.

descendants of these females; and Gūroorū once obtained permission from one of the gods to devour all the serpents he could find^d.

The story of Gūroorū's becoming the carrier of Vishnob is thus related in the *Mūhābharātū*:—His mother in the above dispute having laid a wager, and being the loser, was reduced to a state of servitude to her sister; and the serpents, wishing to become immortal, promised to liberate his mother on condition that Gūroorū should bring Chūndrū, (the moon;) whose bright parts, the Hindoos say, are filled with the water of immortality. Before Gūroorū departed, he asked his mother for some food. She advised him to go to the sea shore, and gather up whatever he could see; but conjured him to beware of eating a bramhūn: adding, 'Should you at any time feel a burning heat in your stomach, be sure you have eaten a bramhūn.' Thus instructed, he began his journey: at his flight the three worlds were agitated like the sea at the great deluge. Passing by a country inhabited by fishermen, he at one inspiration drew in houses, trees, cattle, men, and other animals; but, among the inhabitants swallowed, one was a bramhūn, who caused such an intolerable burning in his bowels, that Gūroorū, unable to bear it, called, in the greatest haste, for him to come out. The bramhūn refused, unless his wife, a fisherman's daughter, might accompany him; to which Gūroorū consented. Pursuing his journey, Gūroorū met his father Kūshyūpū, who directed him to appease his hunger at a certain lake where an elephant and a tortoise were fighting. The body of the tortoise was eighty miles long, and the elephant's one hundred and

^d When the Hindoos lie down to sleep, they repeat the name of Gūroorū three times, to obtain protection from snakes.

sixty. Gūroorū with one claw seized the elephant, with the other the tortoise, and perched with them on a tree eight hundred miles high ; but the tree was unable to bear the ponderous weight, and unhappily thousands of pigmy bramhūns were then worshipping on one of its branches. Trembling lest he should destroy any of them, he took the bough in his beak, continuing to hold the elephant and tortoise in his claws, and flew to a mountain in an uninhabited country, where he finished his repast on the tortoise and elephant. Gūroorū, having surmounted astonishing dangers, at last seized the moon, and concealed it under his wing ; but on his return was attacked by Indrū and other gods, all of whom, however, except Vishnoo, he overcame ; and even he was so severely put to it in the contest, that he came to terms with Gūroorū, who was made immortal, and promised a higher seat than Vishnoo, while Gūroorū on his part became the carrier of Vishnoo. Since this time Vishnoo rides on Gūroorū ; while the latter, in the shape of a flag, sits at the top of Vishnoo's car.

Gūroorū is worshipped at the great festivals before the different images of Vishnoo ; but has no separate time of worship. His image is placed in the temples dedicated to various forms of Vishnoo ; and some persons receive his name as their guardian deity, and repeat it daily.

Gūroorū's two sons, Sūmpatee and Jūtayoo, once flew, as a trial of strength, up to the sun ; but the wings of Sūmpatee were burnt off. Gūroorū resides in Kooshū-dwēpū, one of the seven islands into which the Hindoos divide the earth.

Names. Gūroomūt, or, he who is clothed with feathers.—Gūroorū, he who swallows [serpents, and throws

up their bones.]—Tarkshyū, from Tŭrkshyū, the father of Gŭroorŭ.—Voinŭtéyŭ, from Vinŭta.—Khŭgëshwŭrŭ, the lord of the feathered tribes.—Nagantŭkŭ, the destroyer of the serpents, (nagŭs.)—Vishnoo-rŭt'hŭ, the carrier of Vishnoo.—Soopŭrnŭ, he whose feathers are of the colour of gold.—Pŭnnŭga-shŭnŭ, the devourer of the serpents.

SECT. II.—*Uroonŭ,*

THE elder brother of Gŭroorŭ, is the charioteer of Sŏor-yŭ, the sun; and is worshipped with his master, as well as at the festivals of other gods. The image of this god is that of a man without thighs.

SECT. III.—*Jŭtayoo.*

THIS bird is the friend of Ramŭ, and is worshipped at the same festival with him. He is mentioned in the preceding account of Ramŭ.

SECT. IV.—*Shŭnkŭrŭ Chillŭ, or the Eagle of Coromandel.*

THIS is the white-headed kite, commonly called the bramhŭnee kite. It is considered as an incarnation of Doorga, and is revered by the Hindoos, who bow to it whenever it passes them.

SECT. V.—*Khājūnū, or the Wag-tail,*

Is considered as a form of Vishnoo, on account of the mark on its throat, supposed to resemble the shalgramū. The Hindoos honour it in the same manner as they do the eagle of Coromandel.

SECT. VI.—*Other Birds worshipped.*

THE peacock, the goose, and the owl*, are worshipped at the festivals of Kartikū, Brūmha, and Lūkshmē.

* If, however, the owl, the vulture, or any other unclean birds, perch upon the house of a Hindoo, it is an unlucky omen, and the effect must be removed by the performance of the following expiatory ceremony: 'If a vulture, a heron, a dove, an owl, a hawk, a gull, a kite, a Bhasha, or a Pundura, should settle upon a house, the wife, or a child, or some other person belonging to the master of the house, will die, or some other calamity will befall him within a year afterwards. To prevent this, the house, or its value in money, must be given to bramhūns; or a peace-offering of an extraordinary nature must be offered: viz. five productions of the cow, the five gems, the five nectareous juices, the five twigs of trees, and the five astringents, are to be put into a pot of water; the guardian deities of the quarters of the universe must then be worshipped, and an hundred and eight oblations of clarified butter must be made with a sacrificial piece of the wood of the Khadira tree, while the prayer of Mrityoñjyūti is repeated. The oblation, called the mūha-vyadhee homū, is to be performed at the commencement, or at the end of this ceremony. Oblations of clarified butter, at each of which the gayitree is repeated, are then to be made to Vishnoo, the nine planets, Udbhootū, and the household gods; which being done, the bramhūns must be entertained with clarified butter and rice milk. The sacrificial fees must then be paid, and water sprinkled with appropriate incantations; when an assurance that all has been duly performed being given, a prostration is made to the bramhūns, and the benediction received from them.'

CHAP. XII.

THE WORSHIP OF TREES.

TREES are worshipped by the Hindoos as the forms of particular gods: the ūshwūtū and vūtū are representatives of Vishnoo, and the vilwū that of Shivū. The devout Hindoos worship them, water their roots, plant them near their houses, &c. The Hindoo females, who are never seen in the streets, plant a sacred tree within the compound, that they may not lose the merit of watering it in the sultry months. The female shōōdrūs, to honour the wives of bramhūns, carry water to these trees, and on a fortunate day make offerings to them.

SECT. 1.—*The Toolūsee*².

THE Hindoos have no public festival in honour of this plant; but they occasionally prostrate themselves before it, repeating a form of prayer or praise: they have great faith also in the power of its leaves to cure diseases, and use it with incantations to expel the poison of serpents. They plant it also before their houses, and in the morning cleanse the place around it with water and cow-dung; and in the evening place a lamp near it. Throughout the month Voishakhū they suspend a large pot over it filled with water, and let the water drop upon it through a small hole.

Basil, Ocimum gratissimum, and *O. sanctum*. The myrtle was sacred to Venus.

Whenever any of these plants die, it is considered a sacred duty to commit them to the river; and when a person is brought to the river side to die, his relations plant a branch of the toolūsee near the dying man's head. A pillar, hollow at the top, is erected by many Hindoos, in which they deposit earth, and set the plant. They walk round these pillars and bow to the plant; which actions are declared by the shastrūs to be very meritorious.

The origin of the worship of the Toolūsee is thus related in the Vishnoo pooranū, and in the Toolūsee-Mahatmū :— Toolūsee, a female, was engaged for a long time in religious austerities; and at length asked this blessing of Vishnoo, that she might become his wife. Lūkshmēē, Vishnoo's wife, hearing this, cursed the woman, and changed her into a Toolūsee plant^b; but Vishnoo promised, that he would assume the form of the shalgramū, and always continue with her. The Hindoos, therefore, continually keep one leaf of the toolūsee under and another upon the shalgramū.

^b Apollo changed the youth Cyparissus into a cypress tree. Daphne was changed into a laurel.

SECT. II.—*Other sacred Trees.*

THE ūshwüttü^c, vütü^d, vūkoolū^e, hūritūkēē^f, amülūkēē^g, vilwū^h, and nimbūⁱ trees receive divine honours from the Hindoos, and are set apart with the same ceremonies as are common at the setting up of an image of the gods. These ceremonies take place either at the time of planting the tree, or after the person has watered and nourished it for some time. An individual who consecrates an ūshwüttü or a vütü, considering these trees as continuing to flourish many years, says, ‘Oh ! Vishnoo ! grant that, for planting this tree, I may continue as many years in heaven as this tree shall remain growing in the earth !’ The person expects too, that as he has set apart this tree to afford shade to his fellow creatures, so after death he will not be scorched by excessive heat in his journey to Yūmū, the regent of death.

^c *Ficus religiosa*. This and other trees are never injured, nor cut down, nor burnt by devout Hindoos. I was once informed by a bramhūn, that his grand father planted one of these trees near his house, which has now spread its branches so widely, that, as my informant affirmed, 2000 persons may stand under it ; and so much is this tree revered by his family, that they do not suffer its withered branches to be burnt.

^d *Ficus Indica*, vulgarly called the banyan tree.

^e *Mimusops elengi*.

^f *Terminalia citrina*.

^g *Phyllanthus emblica*.

^h *Ægle marmelos*.

ⁱ *Melia azodacta*.

CHAP. XIII.

THE WORSHIP OF RIVERS.

RIVERS are to be placed among the objects of Hindoo worship^k: they are of both genders, Nūdū and Nūdēē. The worship of these rivers is performed at auspicious seasons, as laid down in the shastrū, and at some of the great festivals. Certain places also of these rivers are peculiarly sacred, and draw to them great numbers of devotees; as, the source of the Ganges; the union of the Ganges, the Yūmoona, and the Sūrūswūtēē at Prūyagū^l; the branching of this united river into three streams at Trivēnēē; the place where the Ganges disembogues itself into the sea, &c. Their waters are used for food, bathing, medicine, religious ceremonies, &c. and formerly when a Hindoo king was crowned, they were poured upon his head as a part of his consecration.

 SECT. I.—Gūnga.

THIS goddess is represented as a white woman, wearing a crown, sitting on the sea animal Mūkūrū, and having in

^k The notion of certain rivers being sacred, seems to have prevailed amongst other heathen nations. Hence Naaman, the Syrian, said, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?'

^l It is ascertained, that there are six places of this name, five of which are situated on the river Ulūkāmūda. See Asiatic Researches, vol. xi.

her right hand a water-lily, and in her left the lute. She is called the daughter of mount *Himavūt*, though some of the pooranūs declare that she was produced from the sweat of *Vishnoo's* foot, which *Brūmha* caught and preserved in his alms' dish.

The grandfather of *Bēēshmū* was one day performing religious austerities near the Ganges, when the goddess fell in love with him, and, in order to persuade him to a union, went and sat upon his right knee. He told her that the left knee was the proper place for the wife, and the right for the son: that therefore she should not become his, but be united to his son; whose name was *Santūnoo*. After *Santūnoo* and *Gūnga* had been married some time, she was about to leave him; but consented to stay, on condition that she might kill all her children at their birth. When the first child was born, she threw it into the river, and so on to the seventh inclusive. As she was destroying the eighth, *Santūnoo* forbid her, in consequence of which the child was saved, but she abandoned her paramour. The whole of this was to fulfil a curse pronounced by *Vishnoo* on the eight gods named *Ūshtū-vūsoo*.

The *Ramayūnū*, *Mūhabharūtū*, and the *Gūnga-khūndū*, a part of the *Skūndū pooranū*, give long accounts of the descent of *Gūnga* from heaven:—*Sūgūrū*, a king, having no children, entered upon a long course of austere devotion; in the midst of which *Bhrigoo* appeared to him, and promised, that from the eldest queen should be born sixty thousand children, and from the other only a single child. After some time, the queen was delivered—of a pumpkin! which the king in anger dashed to the ground, when the fruit was broken, and, to his astonishment, he saw children rising from it; and, calling sixty thousand nurses, put each

child into a pan of milk. The other wife had a son, whom they called Ūngshooman. After these sons were grown up, the king resolved to perform once more the sacrifice of a horse before his death, and committed the victim to the care of his sixty thousand sons. The person who performs this sacrifice one hundred times, succeeds to the throne of heaven. On this occasion the reigning Indrū was alarmed, this being Sūgūrū's hundredth sacrifice. To prevent its taking effect, therefore, he descended to the earth, and assuming another form, privately carried off the horse, which he placed in patalū, near to Kūpilū, a sage. The sixty thousand sons, after searching throughout the earth in vain, began to dig into patalū^c, where they found the horse standing by the side of Kūpilū, who was absorbed in his devotions. Incensed at the old man, whom they supposed to be the thief, they began to beat him; when, awaking from his abstraction of mind, he reduced them all to ashes. The king for a long time heard no more of his sons; but at length Narūdū informed him of the catastrophe. He then sent his son Ūngshooman down to the sage, who delivered up the horse, and informed the king, that if he could bring the goddess Gūnga from heaven^d, his sons might be restored to him. The king offered the sacrifice, and placing Ūngshooman on the throne, took up his residence in a forest as a hermit, where he died. Ūngshooman, in his turn, making his son Dwileepū his successor, died also in a forest. Dwileepū had two wives, but no children; he therefore abdicated the throne, and em-

^c The Hindoo writers say, that the seven seas were thus formed by the sons of Suguru. Some accounts add, that not finding a place large enough to contain the earth which they thus dug up—they devoured it!

^d Or, as it is explained, if he could perform the funeral rites for these sixty thousand persons with the efficacious waters of the Ganges, they would be delivered from the curse, and ascend to heaven.

bracing the life of a hermit, sought of the gods a son, and the deliverance of the sons of Sūgūrū. Shivū promised him, that by means of his two queens a son should be born. These women lived together, and after some time the youngest had a son, whom they called Bhūgēērūt'hū^c; who, however, was only a mass of flesh. Though greatly moved at the sight of such a child, they preserved it, and in time it grew up to manhood. One day Ūshtū-vūkrū, a moonee, who was hump-backed, and wriggled in walking, called to see these females; when Bhūgēērūt'hū, in rising to salute the sage, trembled and wriggled in such a manner, that Ūshtū-vūkrū, thinking he was mocking him, said, 'If thou canst not help wriggling thus, be a perfect child; but if thou art mocking me, be destroyed.' The boy immediately became perfect, and the sage gave him his blessing. When Bhūgēērūt'hū was grown up, he addressed his prayers to different gods for the restoration of his sixty thousand relations—but in vain; at length Brūmha, moved by his piety, gave him a single drop of the water; and Vishnoo giving him a shell which he blew, Gūnga followed him. As she had to fall from heaven to earth, Bhūgēērūt'hū was afraid lest the earth should be crushed by her fall: wherefore Shivū, standing on mount Himavūt, caught Gūnga in his bunch of matted hair, and detained her there for some time; but at length suffered one drop to fall on the mountain: and from thence, on the tenth of the increase of the moon in Jyoisht'hū, the goddess touched the earth, and which ever way Bhūgēērūt'hū went blowing the conch, there Gūnga followed him.

Several very curious circumstances happened to Gunga

* This story is so extremely indelicate, that it is impossible to translate it.

as she passed along. In one place she ran near Jūnhoo, a sage, and washed away his mendicant's dish, the flowers for worship, &c. upon which he, in anger, took her up, and swallowed her. At the intreaties of Bhūgēerūt'hū, however, the sage let her pass out at his thigh, on which account Gūnga received the name of Janhūvē.

On they went, till Gūnga asked Bhūgēerūt'hū where these sixty thousand relations were whom she was to deliver. He being unable to inform her, she, to make sure of their deliverance, at the entrance of the sea, divided herself into one hundred streams^f, and ran down into patalū; where, as soon as the waters of Gūnga touched their ashes, they were delivered from the curse, and ascended in chariots to heaven.

When Gūnga was brought from heaven, the gods, conscious that their sins also needed washing away, petitioned Brūmbha on the subject, who soothed them by promising that Gūnga should remain in heaven, and descend to earth also. This goddess, therefore was called Mūndakinee in heaven, Gūnga on earth, and Bhogūvūtē in patalū.

✓ All casts worship Gūnga, yet most of the ceremonies at the time of the daily ablutions, with the exception of some forms of praise to this goddess, are in the name of Shivū and other gods. The Hindoos particularly choose the banks of this river for their worship, as the merit of works performed here, according to the promise of the shastrūs^g,

^f The mouths of the Ganges.

^g 'He who thinks upon Gūnga, though he may be 800 miles distant from the river at the time, is delivered from all sin, and is entitled to heaven.—At the hour of death, if a person think upon Gūnga, he will obtain a place in the heaven of Shivū.—If a person, according to the re-

becomes exceedingly augmented. In Voishakhū, Jyoisht'hū, Kartikū, and Maghū, the merit is greater than in other months; and at the full moon in these months is still more enhanced. In every month, on the first, sixth, and eleventh of the moon, and at its total wane also, bathing in Gūnga is much recommended.

✓ On the third of the moon in Voishakhū, a few Hindoos perform the ceremonies of worship by the side of the river, under the expectation that the benefits will be undecayable: such is the promise of the smritee shastrūs.

On the 10th of the moon's increase in Jyoisht'hū, in the forenoon, the Dūshūhūra festival is held, in commemoration of Gūnga's descent to the earth. Crowds of people assemble from the different towns and villages near the river, especially at the most sacred places of the river, bringing their offerings of fruit, rice, flowers, cloth, sweetmeats, &c. and hang garlands of flowers across the river, even where it is very wide. After the people have bathed, the officiating bramhūn ascends the banks of the river with them; and after repeating sūngkūlpū^b, places before him a jar of water, and sitting with his face to the

gulations of the shastru, be going to bathe in Gunga, and die on the road, he shall obtain the same benefits as though he had actually bathed.—There are 3,500,000 holy places belonging to Gūnga: the person who looks at Gunga, or bathes in this river, will obtain all the fruit which arises from visiting all these 3,500,000 holy places.—If a person who has been guilty of killing cows, bramhūns, his gooroo, or of drinking spirits, &c. touch the waters of Gūnga, desiring in his mind the remission of these sins, they will be forgiven.—By bathing in Gūnga, accompanied with prayer, a person will remove at once the sins of thousands of births.—*Gunga-Vakya-Vulee.*

^b An incantation, at the time of repeating which the person promises to attend to certain ceremonies.

north or east, performs what is called ghūtū-st'hapñūⁱ. After this, the bramhūn performs other ceremonies, as asūnū shoodhee^k, ũngū-nyasū^l, kūrangū-nyasū^l, bhoot-shōōdhee^m, dig-vūndhūnūⁿ, bhōōt-otsarūnū^o, &c. then the worship of the five gods; of the nine planets; of the regents of the ten quarters, &c. To this succeeds meditation, manūsū^p, &c.; the priest next presents the offerings, which may be sixty-four, or eighteen, or sixteen, or ten, or five, or merely flowers and water, according to the person's ability. To these offerings, the worshipper must add sesamum, clarified butter, and barley-flour. The officiating bramhūn next performs the worship of Narayūnū, Mūhēshwūrū^q, Brūmha, Sōōryū, Bhūgēērūt'hū, and Himalūyū; then the worship of the inhabitants of the waters, as the fish, the tortoises, the frogs, the water-snakes, the leeches, the snails^r, the mūkūrū, the shell-fish, the porpoises, &c.

ⁱ The ceremonies performed at the setting up of an image. Here the jar of water is the image, before which the worship of any of the gods may be performed.

• ^k Purifying the seat. ^l Ceremonies accompanied with motions of the fingers. ^m Purifying the five elements of which the body is composed. ⁿ Binding the ten quarters, to prevent evil spirits from arriving to defile the worship. ^o Driving away the evil spirits. ^p Going over all the ceremonies in the mind. ^q Shivū.

^r This strongly reminds us of the lines of Juvenal, Satire xv.

‘ Who has not heard, where Egypt’s realms are nam’d,
What monster gods her frantic sons have fram’d ?
Here Ibis gorg’d with well-grown serpents *, there
The crocodile† commands religious fear :
Where Memnon’s statue magic strings inspire
With vocal sounds that emulate the lyre;
And Thebes (such, Fate, are thy disastrous turns !)
Now prostrate o’er her pompous ruins mourns ;
A monkey-god‡, prodigious to be told !
Strikes the beholder’s eye with burnished gold :

* See Gurooru. † The Hindoos throw their children to the alligators. ‡ Hunooman.

The offerings, after having been presented to the inhabitants of the waters, are thrown into the Ganges. Ten lamps of clarified butter are then lighted up, and all the other offerings presented. After this, the names of certain gods are repeated, with forms of praise; the fee is presented to the priest, the bramhūns are entertained, and the offerings sent to the houses of bramhūns. At the close of these ceremonies the people perform obeisance to Gūnga, and then depart. Great multitudes assemble on the banks of the river on these occasions, and expect much both in this life and hereafter from this act of worship. If a person, placing on his head ten fruits of any kind, thus immerse himself in the Ganges on this day, the sins of ten births will be removed.

In this month also clay images of Gūnga are set up in domestic temples, and worshipped, and the next day thrown into the river. In some places clay images of this goddess are preserved in clay temples, and worshipped daily. Persons escaping dangers on water present offerings to Gūnga, as well as to Vūroonū, the Indian Neptune; as mariners, having escaped the dangers of the sea, used to offer a sacrifice to Venus.

On the thirteenth of the decrease of the moon in

To godship here blue Triton's scaly herd,
 The river progeny is there preferr'd ||:
 Through towns Diana's power neglected lies,
 Where to her dogs § aspiring temples rise:
 And should you leeks or onions eat, no time
 Would expiate the sacrilegious crime.
 Religious nations sure, and blest abodes,
 Where every orchard is o'errun with gods!

|| See the account above.

§ See a preceding article.

Choitrū, the people descend into the water, and with their hands joined immerse themselves; after which the officiating bramhūn reads a portion of the shastrū, describing the benefits arising from this act of bathing. The people repeat after the priest certain significant words, as the day of the month, the name of Vishnoo, &c. and then immerse themselves again. Gifts of rice, fruits, and money are offered to the poor, the bramhūns; and the priest. On this occasion groups of ten or twelve persons stand in the water in one spot, for whom one bramhūn reads the formulas. These groups are to be seen extending themselves very far along the river. At the moment of the conjunction of the moon (on the thirteenth of its decrease) with the star Shū-tūbhisha, this festival is called the Great Varoonēē. The merit arising from bathing at this lucky moment is supposed to be very great; the people fast till the bathing is over. When there is a conjunction as above, and the day falls on a Saturday, the festival is called the Great, Great Varoonēē*.

The pooranūs declare, that the sight, the name, or the touch of Gūnga takes away all sin, however heinous; that thinking of Gūnga, when at a distance, is sufficient to remove the taint of sin; but that bathing in Gūnga has blessings in it of which no imagination can conceive.

[So much is this river revered among the Hindoos, that many bramhūns will not cook upon it, nor throw saliva into it, nor wash themselves nor their clothes in it. Some

* At the time of many of the festivals, the sides of the Ganges, in many places, are gaily illuminated; and lights fastened on boards, plantain stalks, &c. or put in earthen pots, are floated down the stream.

† In the work called Valmēckee-moonee, amongst many other forms of praise to be offered to Gūnga, is the following:—‘ O goddess, the owl that

persons perform a journey of five or six months to bathe in Gūnga, to perform the rites for deceased relations, and to carry this water to place in their houses, for religious and medicinal uses. The water of this river is used also in the English courts of justice to swear upon, as the koran is given to Mūsūlmans, and the New Testament to Christians; but many of the most respectable Hindooſ refuse to comply with this method of making oath, alleging that their shastrūs forbid them in these cases to touch the water of the Ganges^d, the shalgramū, or a bramhūn. When such cases occur in the courts, the judges very candidly permit the person, if of good character, to give his evidence in a way consistent with his peculiar prejudices, as, after bathing, &c. and standing with his face to the east. The Hindoo courts formerly admitted a person's evidence without an oath; and when a cause could not be determined by evidence thus given, they resorted to the ordeal. It is not uncommon for one Hindoo to say to another, 'Will you make this engagement on the banks of Gūnga?' The other replies, 'I engage to do what I have said; but I cannot call Gunga to witness it.' If a person utter a most audacious lie, while near or upon the Ganges, the person to whom he is speaking says, 'Are you not afraid of uttering such a falsehood in the presence of Gunga?' A third person perhaps adds, as a continuation of the reproach—'Not he; he has been guilty of discharging his urine into Gūnga, even at Prūyagū.']

lodges in the hollow of a tree on thy banks is exalted beyond measure; while the emperor, whose palace is far from thee, though he may possess a million of stately elephants, and may have the wives of millions of conquered enemies to serve him, is nothing.'

* Many persons refuse to contest causes in which large sums are at stake, under the fear that they may be constrained to make oath on the waters of the Ganges.

Morning and evening the Hindoos visit and look at this river to remove the sins of the night or of the day; when sick they smear their bodies with the sediment, and remain near the river for a month perhaps. Some of course recover, and others die: a Hindoo says, that those who have a steady faith and an unwavering mind, recover; the rest perish.

The Hindoos are extremely anxious to die in the sight of the Ganges, that their sins may be washed away in their last moments. A person in his last agonies is frequently dragged from his bed and friends, and carried, in the coldest or in the hottest weather, from whatever distance, to the river side; where he lies, if a poor man, without a covering day and night till he expires: with the pains of death upon him, he is placed up to the middle in the water, and drenched with it. Leaves of the toolüsee plant are also put into his mouth; and his relations call upon him to repeat, and repeat for him, the names of Ramü, Hüree, Narayünü, Brümha, Gunga, &c. In some cases the family priest repeats some incantations, and makes an offering to Voitürünēc, the river over which the soul, they say, is ferried after leaving the body. The relations of the dying man spread the sediment of the river on his forehead or breast, and afterwards with the finger write on this sediment the name of some deity. If a person should die in his house, and not by the river side, it is considered as a great misfortune, as he thereby loses the help of the goddess in his dying moments. If a person choose to die at home, his memory becomes infamous. The conduct of Raja Nüvü-krishnü of Nüdēya, who died in his bed-room about the year 1800, is still mentioned as a subject of reproach, because he refused to be carried to the river before death. 'Ah! Ah!' say the superstitious, when a neighbour at the

point of death delays the fatal journey to the river, 'he will die like Raja Nūvū-Krishnū.'

Dead bodies are brought by their relations to be burnt near this river; and when they cannot bring the whole body, it is not uncommon for them to bring a single bone and cast it into the river*, under the hope that it will help the soul of the deceased.

In the eastern parts of Bengal, married women, long disappointed in their hopes of children, make an offering to Gūnga, and enter into a vow, that if the goddess will give them two children, they will present one to her: and it is not uncommon for such women to cast the first child into the river as an offering; but it is said, that at present some relation or religious mendicant stands ready to preserve the life of the child. The mother cannot take it again, but this person adopts and provides for it. These offerings are made on the tenth of the moon in Jyoisht'hū, and on the 13th of Choitrū.]

Some persons even drown themselves in the Ganges, not doubting but they shall immediately ascend to heaven.

* Many persons, whose relations die at a distance from the Ganges, at the time of burning the body preserve a bone, and at some future time bring this bone and commit it to Gūnga, supposing that this will secure the salvation of the deceased. The work called Kriya-yogūsarū contains the following curious story:—A brāmhūn, who had been guilty of the greatest crimes, was devoured by wild beasts; his bones only remained. A crow took up one of these bones, and was carrying it over Gūnga, when another bird darting upon it, the crow let the bone fall. As soon as the bone touched Gūnga, the brāmhūn sprang to life, and was ascending to heaven, when the messenger of Yūmū, the judge of the dead, seized him, as a great sinner. At this time Narayānū's messengers interfered, and pleaded, that the sins of this man, since one of his bones had touched

The shastrū encourages this⁷. It is a sin for a bramhūn, but an act of merit in a shōōdrū or a dūndēē, if he be in worldly trouble, or afflicted with an incurable distemper. The Gūnga-Vakya-Vūlee says, 'Should any person have eaten with another who is degraded for seven successive births; or have committed the five sins, each of which is called mūha-patūkū; should he have eaten the food which has been touched by a woman in her courses; or have constantly spoken falsely; or have stolen gold, jewels, &c.; should he have killed the wife of his friend; or have injured bramhūns, or friends, or his mother, &c.; or have committed the sins which doom a man to the hell called Mūha-rourūvū; or have committed those sins for which the messengers of Yūmū constantly beat a person; or have committed multitudes of sins in childhood, youth, and old age;—if this person bathe in Gūnga at an auspicious period, all

Gūnga, were all done away. The appeal was made to Vishnōo, who decided in the bramhūn's favour. The bramhūn immediately went to heaven.

⁷ The Skūndū pooranū declares, that by dying in the Ganges, a person will obtain absorption into Brūmhū. The same work contains a promise from Shivū, that whoever dies in Gūnga shall obtain a place in his heaven.—The Bhūvishyū pooranū affirms, that if a worm, or an insect, or a grasshopper, or any tree growing by the side of Gūnga, die in the river, it will obtain absorption into Brūmhū.—The Brūmhū pooranū says, that whether a person renounce life in Gūnga, praying for any particular benefit, or die by accident, or whether he possess his senses or not, he will be happy. If he purposely renounce life, he will enjoy absorption, or the highest happiness; if he die by accident, he will still attain heaven.—Mūnōo says, 'A mansion with bones for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for mortar; with skin for its outward covering; filled with no sweet perfume, but loaded with fæces and urine; a mansion infested by age and by sorrow, the seat of malady, harassed with pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing long; such a mansion of the vital soul let its occupier always cheerfully quit.'

these sins will be removed : he will also be admitted into the heaven of Brūmha, the Pūrūm-hūngsee ; be put in possession of the merits of the man who presents a lack of red cows to a bramhūn learned in the four védūs ; and afterwards will ascend and dwell at the right hand of Vishnoo. After he has enjoyed all this happiness, and shall be re-born on the earth, he will be possessed of every good-quality, enjoy all kinds of happiness, be very honourable, &c. He who shall doubt any part of this, will be doomed to the hell called Koombhēc-pakū, and afterwards be born an ass. If a person, in the presence of Gūnga, on the anniversary of her arrival on the earth, and according to the rules prescribed in the shastrūs, present to the bramhūns whole villages, he will obtain the fruits that arise from all other offerings, from all sacrifices, from visiting all the holy places, &c. ; his body will be a million times more glorious than the sun ; he will obtain a million of virgins, and multitudes of carriages, palanqueens, &c. covered with jewels ; he will dwell for ages in heaven, enjoying its pleasures in company with his father ; as many particles of dust as are contained in the land thus given away to the bramhūns, for so many years will the giver dwell in happiness in Vishnoo's heaven.'

Every real Christian must be deeply affected on viewing the deplorable effects of this superstition. Except that part of the rig-védū which countenances the burning of women alive, no writers ever gave birth to a more extensive degree of misery than those who have made the Ganges a sacred river. Thousands, yea millions of people are annually drawn from their homes and peaceful labours, several times in the year, to visit different holy places of this river, at a great expense of time, and money spent in making offerings to the goddess ; expensive journeys are undertaken by vast

multitudes to obtain the water² of this river, (some come two or three months' journey for this purpose,) or to carry the sick, the dying, the dead, or the bones of the dead, to its banks. What the sick and dying suffer by being exposed to all kinds of weather in the open air on the banks of the river, and in being choked by the *sacred* water in their last moments, is beyond expression. In short, no eyes, but those of Omniscience, can see all the foul deeds done upon and by the sides of this river; and the day of judgment alone can bring all these deeds to light. The bramhūn will then see, that instead of Gūnga's having removed the sins of her worshippers, she has increased them a million-fold. ✓

SECT. II.—*Other deified Rivers.*

THE Godavūree, the Nūrmūda, the Kavérēē, the Atréyēē, the Kūrūtoya, the Bahooda, the Gomūtēē, the Sūrūyoo, the Gūndūkēē, the Varahēē, the Chūrmūn-wūtec, the Shūtū-droo, the Vipasha, the Goutūniēē, the Kūrmūnasha, the Shonū^a, the Oiravūtēē, the Chūndrūbhaga, the Vitūsta, the Sindhoo, the Bhūdra-vūkasha, the Pūnūsa, the Dēvika, the Tamrūpūrnēē, the Toongūbhūdra, the Krishna, the Vétrū-vūtēē, the Bhoirūvū, the Brūmhū-pootrū^b, the Voitūrūnēē, and many other rivers, are mentioned in the Hindoo shastrūs as sacred.

At the full moon in Asharhū, many thousand Hindoos assemble at Prūtapū-gūrū, a place to the west of Lucknow,

^a Many thousands perish by the dysentery, and others through want, in these journeys.

^a This is a male river.

^b Ditto.

and bathe in the Godavūrēē, or in the remains of it, (for at this season of the year this river is nearly dried up.)

On the last day of Choitrū, a large assembly of Hindoos meet at Modūphūrū-poorū, about sixteen miles from Patna, where the Gūndakēē, the Sūrūyoo, and the Ganges meet^b. The assembly remains eight days, and a large fair is held on the spot, at which horses, camels, and other beasts, and also children, are bought and sold : the price of a boy is from ten to twelve roopees ; that of a girl is less.

On the same day a large concourse of Hindoos, some say as many as 20,000, principally women, assemble at Ūyodhya, to bathe in the Sūrūyoo.

On the 14th of the decrease of the moon in Phalagoonū, an equal number of people are said to meet on the banks of the Sūrūyoo at Būhūrūm-ghatū, near Lucknow : but they do not bathe in the river, the water of which is very filthy, but in a sacred pool adjoining.

On the banks of the Yūmoona, on the second of the moon in Kartikū, and on the eighth of the decrease of the moon in Bhadrū, vast crowds of Hindoos assemble in different places to bathe.

The Brūmhū-pootrū receives the same honours on the eighth of the increase of the moon in Choitrū. At a place

^b There are several causes why particular places of these rivers are esteemed peculiarly sacred. Some of these causes are given in the shastrū, and others arise from tradition. One instance of the latter occurs respecting Vaidyātēē, a place near Serampore, where Nimaee, a religious mendicant, performed his devotions, and where at present, at a conjunction of particular stars, multitudes assemble to bathe.

three days' journey from Dacca, 50 or 60,000 people assemble, and sacrifice pigeons, sheep, and goats, casting them into the river. Children are also cast into the river here by their mothers, but are generally rescued and carried home by strangers. Superstitious people say, that on this day the river gradually swells so as to fill its banks, and then gradually sinks to its usual level.

The Voitŭrŭnĕĕ, in Orissa, is also placed among the sacred rivers, and on the thirteenth of the decrease of the moon in Choitrŭ, great multitudes of Hindoos, (six or seven hundred thousand,) assemble at Yajŭ-poorŭ, near the temple of Jŭgŭnnat'hŭ, and bathe in this river.

Many other rivers receive the same honours^c; and I could have greatly enlarged this account, in detailing their fabulous histories, and in noticing the superstitious ceremonies of this deluded people on their banks: but what I have here inserted, and the preceding account of Gunga, must suffice.

• See Asiatic Researches.

CHAP. XIV.

THE WORSHIP OF FISH.

VISHNOO, having been incarnate in the form of a fish, is worshipped on certain occasions, or rather a form of praise is repeated in honour of this incarnation.

In the preceding account of Gūnga it will also be seen, that the finny tribes of that river are worshipped at the festivals in honour of this goddess.

I am informed, however, that female Hindoos, residing on the banks of the Pūdmū, on the 5th of the increase of the moon in Maghū, actually worship the Ilīshū fish, when they first arrive in the river, with the usual ceremonies, and after that partake of them without the fear of injuring their health.

CHAP. XV

THE WORSHIP OF BOOKS.

THE Hindoos have deified their shastrūs, which, on different occasions, they worship with the same ceremonies as an idol, anointing the book with perfumes, and adorning it with garlands.

At the reading of any part of the védūs, the Chündēē, and other works, the book to be read is always addressed as an idol. At such times the worshipper thus prays to the book: ‘Oh! book! thou art the goddess of learning, bestow learning upon me.’

When an individual employs a bramhūn to recite to his family and neighbours the Mūhabharūtū, Ramayñū, Shrēēbhagūvūtū, or any other poorañū, the worship of the work recited is performed on the first and last days at considerable length, many offerings being presented: each day’s recital is also preceded by a short service paid to the book.

At the festival in honour of the goddess Sūrūswūtēē any one of the shastrūs is adopted and worshipped, joined with the pen and inkstand.

The followers of Vishnōo, and especially the mendicant voiragēēs, pay a still greater reverence than the regular Hindoos to the books they esteem sacred. These books relate to the amours of Krishñū, or to the mendicants Choitūnyū and Nityañdū.

A book placed on a golden throne, and presented to a bramhūn, is a very meritorious gift.

CHAP. XVI.

THE WORSHIP OF STONES.

The Shalgramū^a.

THIS is the ætites, or eagle-stone, of which there is a great variety, and to which many virtues were ascribed by the ancients. When I shewed a picture of the eagle-stone to a bramhūn who was sitting with me, without informing him what it was, he exclaimed—‘This is the shalgramū!’ and added, (jocularly,) ‘Oh! then, Englishmen will be saved, as they have the shalgramū amongst them.’

This stone, black, hollow, and nearly round, is said to be brought from mount Gündūkee, in Napaul. It is added, that in this mountain there are multitudes of insects which perforate the masses of stone, so that pieces fall into the river Gündūkū in the shape of the shalgramū, from whence they are taken with nets. Common ones are about as large as a watch. They are valued according to their size, their hollowness, and the colours in the inside; and from these circumstances they are called by different names. The chief sorts are called Lūkshmēē-Narayūnū, Rūghoonat’hū,

* From sharū and gramū, which indicates that this stone makes the place excellent in which it is preserved, as the Mūhabharūtū is said to purify the places in which it is read: hence bramhūns are forbidden to enter a village where the Mūhabharūtū is not found, as such place is pronounced unclean.

Lūkshmēē, Jūnardūnū, Vamūnū, Damodūrū^b, &c. These different shalgramūs are worshipped under their different names. The first is sometimes sold for as much as two thousand roopees. The Hindoos have a notion, that whoever keeps in his house this celebrated stone, and a shell called dūkshina-vūrtū^c, can never become poor; but that the very day in which any one parts with one of them, he will begin to sink into poverty. Almost every respectable bramhūn keeps a shalgramū, as do some shōōdrūs. The bramhūn who does not keep one is reproached by his neighbours.

The reason why this stone has been deified is thus given in the Shrēē-bhagūvūtū :—Vishnōo created the nine planets to preside over the fates of men. Shūnēē (Saturn) commenced his reign by proposing to Brūmha, that he should first come under his influence for twelve years. Brūmha referred him to Vishnōo, but this god, equally averse to be brought under the dreaded influence of this inauspicious planet, desired Saturn to call upon him the next day, and immediately assumed the form of a mountain. The next day Saturn was not able to find Vishnōo, but discovering that he had united himself to mount Gūndūkēē, he entered

^b The Hindoos say, that this last shalgramū requires large offerings of food to be presented to it; and that a bramhūn, who had begged one of them, and neglected to feed it sufficiently, was brought to ruin, this god having swept away nearly his whole family by death. Many stories of this kind are related of this stone. Though a single grain of rice was never known to be eaten by an image, yet the Hindoos firmly believe this and similar stories, against all the evidence of their senses for hundreds of years together. Gopālū, a learned bramhūn employed in the Serampore printing-office, declared that one of these stones had been placed in his house by a relation, who attributed his family misfortunes to its powers.

^c A shell, the convolutions of which turn to the right. Vishnōo is said to hold a shell of this kind in his hand.

the mountain in the form of a worm called vūjrū-kēētū^c. He continued thus to afflict the mountain-formed Vishnoo for twelve years, when Vishnoo assumed his proper shape, and commanded that the stones of this mountain should be worshipped, and should become proper representatives of himself; adding, that each should have twenty-one marks in it, similar to those on his body, and that its name should be shalgramū.

The worship of any of the gods may be performed before the shalgramū, and it is often adopted as the representative of some god. It claims no national festival, but is placed near the image worshipped, and first receives the devotions of the Hindoos. The shalgramū is also worshipped daily by the bramhūns, after morning ablutions: they first bathe or wash the stone, reading the formulas; and then offer flowers, white lead, incense, light, sweetmeats, and water, repeating incantations: the offerings, after remaining before it a short time, are eaten by the family. In the evening, incense, light, and sweetmeats are offered, preceding which a bell is rung, and a shell blown; and the whole is closed by the priest's prostrating himself before the stone.

During the month Voishakhū, bramhūns suspend a pan of water every day over the shalgramū, and, through a small hole at the bottom, let the water fall on it, to preserve it cool during this month, which is one of the hottest in the year. This water is caught in another pan placed beneath, and drank in the evening as holy water. When the country is in great want of rain, a bramhūn in some instances places the shalgramū in the burning sun, and sits down by it, repeating incantations. Burning the god in the sun is said to be a sure way of obtaining rain.

^cLiterally, the thunder-bolt worm.

Some persons, when sick, employ a bramhūn to present single leaves of the toolūsee plant, sprinkled with red powder, to the shalgramū, repeating incantations. A hundred thousand leaves are sometimes presented. - It is said, that the sick man gradually recovers as every additional leaf is offered. When a Hindoo is at the point of death, a bramhūn shews him the marks of the shalgramū, the sight of which is said to secure the soul a safe passage to Vishnoo's heaven.

In a work called Shalgramū-nirnūyū an account is given of the proper names of the different shalgramūs; the benefits arising from their worship; the kinds of shalgramūs proper to be kept by persons in a secular state, and also by the religious.

A separate room, or house, or a particular spot in the room where the family dwell, is assigned to this god. Some persons keep one, others ten, others a hundred, and some even as many as a thousand of these stones.

The shalgramū is rendered impure by the touch of shoodrū^d, and in such cases must be purified by rubbing it over with cow-dung, cow's urine, milk, ghēē, and curds. If a small part of the shalgramū be broken off, the owner commits it to the river. The bramhūns sell these stones, but trafficking in images is dishonourable.

[The shalgramū is the only stone deriving its deity from itself: all other stones worshipped are made sacred by incantations. For an account of them, see a succeeding article relative to the Hindoo images.]

^d So are all other images that have been consecrated.

CHAP. XVII.

A LOG OF WOOD WORSHIPPED.

The Pedal.

THIS is a rough piece of wood, (termed dhénkee,) generally the trunk of a tree, balanced on a pivot, with a head something like a mallet; it is used to separate the rice from the husk, to pound brick-dust for buildings, &c. A person stands at the farthest end, and with his feet presses it down, which raises up the head; after which he lets it fall on the rice, or brick-ends. One of these pedals is set up at almost every house in country places.

The origin of this worship is thus given:—A religious guide, being called upon to give the initiating incantation to one of his disciples, commanded him to repeat the word dhénkee, dhénkee. Narūdū, the god of the dhénkee, pleased with the disciple, visited him, riding on a pedal, and gave him as a blessing another incantation, by which he immediately became perfect, and ascended to heaven.

The pedal is worshipped at the time of marriage, of investiture with the poita, of giving the first rice to a child, and at any other particular time of rejoicing. The women are the worshippers. It is also worshipped in the month Vaishakhū by all casts of females, not excepting the wives of the most learned bramhūns; who consecrate it by put-

ting red, white, or yellow paint, and also some rice, dōōrva grass, and oil on its head.

About twenty years ago, the raja of Nūlū-danga, Mū-héndrū-dévū-rayū, spent three hundred thousand roopees in a grand festival in honour of this log of wood. At the close of the festival, the raja took a firebrand, and set all the gilded scenery on fire, and thus finished this scene of expensive folly and wickedness.

END OF VOL. I.

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monies performed, in the month Choitrū, at the new moon. Only a few persons perform this worship. Except before this image, bloody sacrifices are never offered to Shivū, who is himself called a voishnūvū, i. e. a worshipper of Vishnoo, before whose image no animals are slain, and whose disciples profess never to eat animal food.

Under different names other images of Shivū are described in the shastrūs; but none of these images are made at present, nor is any public worship offered to them.

Those who receive the name of Shivū from their spiritual guides, are called Soivyūs. The mark on the forehead which these persons wear, is composed of three curved lines like a half-moon, to which is added a round dot on the nose. It is made either with the clay of the Ganges, or with sandal wool, or the ashes of cow-dung.

Worship is performed daily at the temples of the lingū; when offerings of various kinds are presented to this image. If the temple belong to a shōōdrū, a bramhūn is employed, who receives a small annual gratuity, and the daily offerings*. These ceremonies occupy a few minutes, or half an hour, at the pleasure of the worshipper. Many persons living in Bengal employ bramhūns at Benares to perform the worship of the lingū in temples which they have built there,

Every year, in the month Phalagoonū, the Hindoos make the image of Shivū, and worship it for one day, throwing

* The shastrūs prohibit the bramhūns from receiving the offerings presented to Shivū: the reason I have not discovered. The bramhūns, however, contrive to explain the words of the shastrū in such a manner, as to secure the greater part of the things presented to this idol.